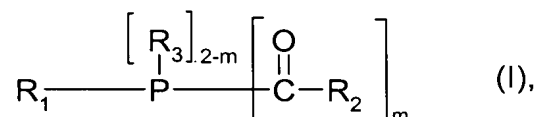


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of acylphosphines of formula (I)



wherein

m is 1 or 2;

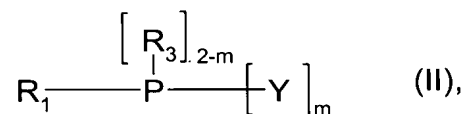
R<sub>1</sub> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms, phenyl substituted C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C<sub>5</sub>-C<sub>12</sub> cycloalkyl, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C<sub>5</sub>-C<sub>12</sub> cycloalkyl being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkylthio and/or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkoxy;

R<sub>2</sub> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkyl, C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>12</sub> cycloalkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, or biphenyl, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, or biphenyl being unsubstituted or substituted by one to four C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkoxy, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkylthio and/or halogen;

R<sub>3</sub> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms; phenyl substituted C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C<sub>5</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-cycloalkyl, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C<sub>5</sub>-C<sub>12</sub> cycloalkyl being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> alkyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkylthio and/or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkoxy;

comprising

(1) reacting organic phosphorus halides of formula (II)

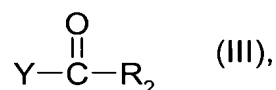


wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_3$  and  $m$  have the meaning cited above;

and  $Y$  is Br or Cl,

with sodium in a solvent in the presence of an activator, wherein sodium is pre-sent in the form of a dispersion of sodium particles having a mean particle size of  $\leq 500 \mu\text{m}$  in the solvent,

(2) subsequent reaction with acid halides of formula (III)



wherein  $R_2$  and  $Y$  have the meaning cited above;

which process is carried out without isolation of the intermediates,

wherein the activator is selected from the group consisting of ~~aliphatic alcohols having 1 to 10 carbon atoms~~ n-butanol, aromatic chlorohydrocarbons, aliphatic chlorohydrocarbons, aromatic bromohydrocarbons, aliphatic bromohydrocarbons, and combinations thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  are independently from each other phenyl, naphthyl and biphenyl, being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen,  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alky and/or  $C_1$ - $C_8$  alkoxy.

Claim 3 (Original): The process according to claim 2, wherein  $R_1$  and  $R_3$  are phenyl and  $R_2$  is 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when  $m$  is 2; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when  $m$  is 1.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from  $-20^{\circ}$  to  $+160^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction (2) is carried out at a temperature of from  $-20^{\circ}$  to  $+120^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein (1) and (2) are carried out in toluene, ethyl benzene, or a combination thereof, as solvent.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 4, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 2; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 1.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 2; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 1.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 4, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 2; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 1.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 5, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 2; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) when m is 1.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.